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AUTHOR McGlinn, Jeanne; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers represents the reading, writing, film-viewing, and discussion exercises that were the center of a 5-week research institute held in North Carolina for educators from the Isaac Dickson Elementary School and the University of North Carolina, Asheville. The papers are (1) "A Model for Staff Development in Multiculturalism" (Jeanne McGlinn); (2) "Disidentification of Black Males from the School" (Robert McGrattan); (3) "Some Theories or Themes in Multicultural Education" (Dee Cash); (4) "Influence of Teacher Expectations on Student Achievement" (Tanya Gilliam); (5) "Teaching Philosophy and Methodology: Multiculturalism as a Key Component" (Robin Grosshuesch); (6) "Parent-Home School Relations" (Monica Levin); (7) "Reading Multiculturally" (Dee James); and (8) "New Perspectives on Minority Achievement" (Cherryl L. Lawrence). A list of speakers is attached as an appendix. Contains 107 references. (SLD)

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ISAAC DICKSON MULTICULTURAL

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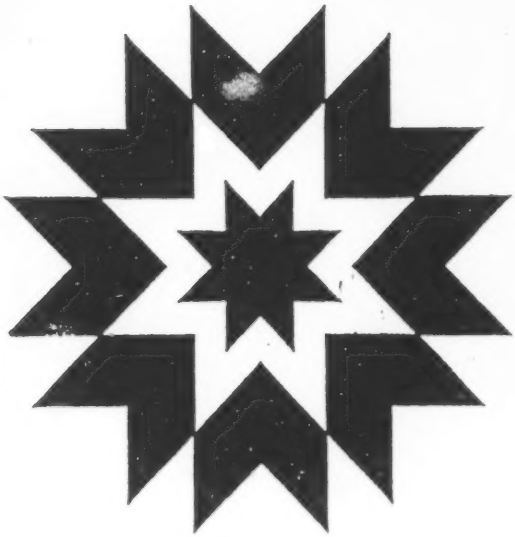

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SUMMER RESEARCH TEAM PROJECT 1992

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Table of Contents
Topic - Researcher - Pages

A Model for Staff Development in Multiculturalism
(Dr.Jeanne McGlinn) ..... 1 - 5

Disidentification of Black Males from the School
(Robert McGrattan) 6- 10

Some Theories or Themes in Multicultural Education
(Dee Cash) 11- 14

Influence of Teacher Expectations on Student Achievement
(Tanya Gilliam) ..... 15 -18

Teaching Philosophy and Methodology: Multiculturalism as a Key Component
(Robin Grosshuesch) 19- 26

Parent-Home School Relations
(Monica Levin) 27- 36

Reading Multiculturally
(Dr. Dee James) 37- 40

New Perspectives on Minority Achievement
(Cherryl L. Lawrence, M.A.) 41- 51

Bibliography and Appendix 52- 59

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A Model for Staff Development in Multiculturalism

"It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it." (Stenhouse, 1985, p.vi)

This plan for staff development in multiculturalism is based on a five-week research institute which was funded by a grant from the Dogwood Foundation and piloted by a group of Isaac Dickson Elementary educators, administrators and UNC-A university instructors during the summer, 1992. Realizing that schools may not be able to allocate the same block of time to staff development as we had, we present here the reading, writing, film viewing and discussion exercises that were the center of our experience so that schools can modify and utilize the various parts of this program to match their needs and schedules.

We began the Summer Research Institute with four basic assumptions:

1. Before we begin to evaluate "other" cultures, we must come to some understanding of what "culture" is. That means immersing ourselves in both Southern, middle class culture as well as African American culture and the culture of poverty. We need systematic training in observing our own culture and those of the children we teach.

2. "The best teacher of teachers is another teacher."
   Realizing that the model of bringing in an "expert" to present teachers with the latest educational concepts generally does not result in any effective learning or affective change in attitudes, we structured the seminar in such a way that it could develop according to the concerns and interests of the participants. The basic structure was frequently modified and refined. All participants in the project were asked to contribute professionally to the project and we respected each other's expertise and autonomy.

3. We believe that real change must be based on knowledge. So while we often have a tendency or need to look for an immediate solution through changes in teaching style or curriculum, we decided to develop a knowledge base **before** we suggested teaching or communication strategies. In this way we hoped that teachers would understand the underlying assumptions that were made before a strategy was suggested and therefore would be more willing to try out the strategy.

4. Literature can be a powerful mean to bring about understanding and acceptance of other cultures. In studies in the **English Journal**,

Hoeveler and Mitchell both contend that reading minority literature has a positive effect on students. Stereotyped attitudes change as people have experiences with individuals in the "other" group. Literature can be the vehicle of such experiences.

Texts / Books:

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor
The Great Gilly Hopkins, Katherine Paterson
Maniac Magee, Jerry Spinelli
Thank You, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr!, Eleanora Tate
Ways with Words, Shirley Brice Heath

Films:

Dead Poet's Society
Boyz in the Hood
Little Man Tate

Articles:

Packet of articles on various aspects of multiculturalism

Overview of our Program:

Focus I: Identifying cultures

Objectives:

1. To learn to identify aspects of European-American, middle class culture, African - American culture and the culture of poverty.
2. to immerse ourselves in the literature, film, and life experiences of the cultures we will be studying

Strategy:

Immersion in culture through viewing films and reading literature, discussions of the texts, journal writing, and field trips

Special components:

1. lecture / discussion about the discipline of anthropology, emphasizing ethnography, the study of small scale cultures, and its implications for the study of cultures
2. field trip and a mini - ethnography project

Focus II: Identifying and studying issues in Multicultural Education

Objectives:

1. to familiarize ourselves with a common set of research articles as groundwork for specific research projects
2. to develop as a group a shared research focus
3. to engage in individual research projects

Strategy:

1. shared reading and discussion of articles and research materials which examine the issues of multicultural education
2. group brainstorming about the topics for research
3. individual library work

Special Components:

1. mini-field work experiences and interviews as appropriate to the particular research question; for example, the researcher studying the question of black youth's "disidentification with school," with group input and help, conducted interviews with black and white male students, asking questions about their orientation to school
2. orientation visit to the library where the researchers were instructed in various library tools available for their research
3. individual conferences with the research consultant

Focus III: Independent Research

Objectives:

To locate, read, evaluate, and synthesize materials for a Summary of Research Findings to be shared with the teachers at Isaac Dickson Elementary

Strategy:

independent research and individual conferences with research consultant

Focus IV: Research Reporting

Objectives:

1. to share individual findings
2. to develop a Summary of the Research Findings

Strategy:

1. group complies and edits a summary of the individual research investigations and individual reactions to the ideas encountered in the readings
2. group design questions for a Teacher's Journal which will facilitate the type of discussion and research which formed the center of the summer session

Seminar Discussion Topics and Exercises

Journal Writing: Cultural Awareness

Goal: to think about ourselves in a cultural context; to identify our own culture; to think about the school culture we experienced as children

1. Describe your earliest memory of yourself going to school and being in a classroom. You might want to begin with a description of the school building and the specific classroom, grade, or teacher you remember. Use all your senses to recreate your experience. Take the listener into the classroom with you as you recall your teacher and classmates.
2. Describe how you came to be the reader/writer you are now
3. Describe what you think of as a "standard American family."
4. After viewing **Dead Poet's Society,** describe your reaction to the film. You might want to start by describing a particular scene which struck you as important and tell how you felt about the scene and the ideas created in it.
5. After viewing **Boyz in the Hood.** What does the father want for his son? Where does school fit in it with this goal? What are the similarities between the two films?
6. Describe the implicit rules that control behavior in a social setting. This writing was based on our group experience of visiting the local mall and doing brief observation of interactions and power relationships. The researchers were asked to note the various types of people that were at the mall, to record the ways people were interacting, the types of social distance they maintained, the way they controlled space. Discussion and analysis of this experience focused on cultural norms that we take for granted in a particular situation and how we fell if these norms are violated.

Summary of our Process

I. Initiating activities

How we got started as a group; how we built trust; how we shared common experiences

1. Introductions gave a sense of professional experience brought into the group.
2. Our first shared experience of journal writing was about our earliest memories of school, which gave a sense of individual and common experiences we had.

3. Film viewing was emotional and powerful. It made us talk about essential values and concepts such as family, success, the American Dream, the role of the teacher, socio-economic expectations and culturally defined ways of acting.

II. Identifying Research Interests

This seemed to be a democratic, consensus building experience. Group discussion and brainstorming led us to identify our major areas of concern. Members of the group created their own areas of interest and their goals for the research.

III. Synthesis of Research

A booklet of research topics and a variety of ongoing activities throughout the year.

IV. Closure

This needs to be an important part of the group process. Participants in the group need to feel that what they have shared and revealed about themselves and their cultural group will be valued and respected as privileged information.

Disidentification of Black Youth from the School

In recent year there has arisen a great concern about the plight of the Black male in American society. Some writers go as far as to call him an *endangered species.* In "Race and the Schooling of Black Americans" (Steele, 1992), the phrase *disidentification* is coined to describe the Black male's rejection of pervasive Euro-American cultural values.

Jawanza Kunjufu in his three volume series, Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boy, takes an in-depth look at the problem from the perspective of an African American father of two boys. He concludes, as do many, that the decline begins somewhere around fourth grade, at about the age of nine.

An informal survey instrument was designed so that a field research project could be carried out. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain whether or not a sample of boys, ages seven to twelve who attended summer school, could give insights into the reason for the decline. further, the responses of this group could be studied to see if indeed there was some attitudinal change that might account for the decline.

Forty-seven boys were surveyed at random from the summer school population in Asheville City schools. These boys represented the bottom quartile as measured by the Spring, 1992 of the *California Achievement Test* (CAT). Both Black And White boys were surveyed, although fewer White boys were surveyed because they represented a much smaller group in the summer school program. The interviews were conducted one to one by members of the Summer Curriculum Research Project. The team members read the questions to the boys individually in ten to fifteen minute interview sessions. The boys were chosen at random from each classroom grades one to five. (See the sample student survey that is in the appendix.)

The data from the survey was disaggregated in a number of ways. First, the results were grouped by age. Then, the responses of the White boys were compared to those of the Black boys. Also, each age group was compared to the other age groups. Numeric responses were represented by percentages, while lists of responses were compiled to the open-ended questions. Some of the significant results are included here.

When asked if they felt better about themselves at school, at home, or in their neighborhood, 54% of the White boys felt best at school, while only 32% of the Black boys felt that way. When asked if they felt they were

smart, 69% of the White boys said yes, while 58% of the Black boys said yes. None of the White boys said they were not smart, while 18% of The Black boys said they were not smart.

In comparing the different age groups, the most revealing finding was that 53% of the 7-8 year-olds, 43% of the 9-year-olds, and 44% of the 10-year olds felt best about themselves when they were at school. However this figure drops dramatically for the 11-and 12-year olds. 16.6% of the 11-year-olds, and only 12.5% of the 12-year-olds felt good about themselves at school. Although this data indicates a later age at which boys' self-esteem in school begins to erode, it clearly does happen. The irony is that when asked if they considered themselves *smart*, the percentage of boys who responded positively increased with age. For example, 62.5% of the 7 and 8-year-olds believed themselves to be smart, while 87.5% of the 12-year-olds believed they were smart. Could it be that the older students have come to understand *smart* in a way that is different than schools understand *smart?*

Although in the bottom quartile of elementary school students in the district, these students have many positive ambitions. Many indicated that they like to learn (especially math), and that they like teachers who would help them do so. They also liked teachers who would teach them right from wrong and be nice to them. Many of these students also had high dreams for themselves; many indicated that they wanted to be doctors, policeman, construction workers, bankers, and professional athletes. One cannot help but wonder what would happen if, on the first day of school, a teacher was told that all the boys in his/her class intended to become doctors and it was his/her job to help them accomplish that goal!

Kunjufu sees the fourth grade syndrome as a shared responsibility of the school, the home, and the community. To lay the entire blame on the doorstep of the school is unfair and unproductive. He believes that too often Black boys are given too much freedom with too little responsibility and too few male role models to emulate. He suggests that the street and the peer group begin to set the values for these boys. This survey bears this out. As the boys begin not to see themselves as successful at school, they begin to feel they are successful at home or in the neighborhood. One might speculate that, as self-esteem is more and more measured by the street, the Black boy increasingly *disidentifies* with school and its values.

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Schools are not powerless in stopping this decline of the Black boy however. Parent support groups can be formed to help support families during the difficult preadolescent years. Parents need to know that it is OK to set limits on time spent with friends, TV watching, and ball playing. They also need to know that chores and responsibilities need to be established at home as well as specified times for academic work.

Teachers - - especially White females - - need to be trained in the way to deal with Black boys. For many they have little or no experience with Black males, and they often find their aggression and competitiveness counterproductive to their desired environment in the classroom. In - service training can help teachers find ways to positively channel that energy and competitiveness.

Schools also need to establish programs to improve the self - esteem of these boys. Discipline needs to be handled in a way that is not punitive and destructive to the male ego. Fights can be turned into competitive events between boys using their mental abilities, or safe physical competition such as arm wrestling. Whether it be *nature* or *nurture,* boys have a demonstrated need to be competitive which schools need to channel in positive ways.

Another program that may help the boys is to *buddy* them up with younger students in the schools. In African American culture, there is a history or older males being responsible for younger ones. Often in the home environment, the older sibling is given the daily responsibility for supervision of the younger children and/or cousins in the family. Schools can tap into this responsible trait by pairing older students with younger students in the school. In this way the older boy become a role model for younger boys. It not only can help the self-esteem of both parties, but help to fill the void of Black male role models in the schools.

Lastly, schools need to aggressively seek out male role models. Elementary schools are fast becoming white, female institutions. Schools need to involve their bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and community volunteers to make sure that these boys are in regular contact with Black males. These role models do not need to be the professional men, but everyday people who held down a job, have a family, and care about others. As these groups are involved, it will become apparent that the responsibility for rescuing the Black male is a community effort aimed at the Black boy.

This informal research raises a number of questions for further study. Some of these include:

- What kind of in-service should white females engage in and with whom to better understand black males?

- Is there evidence that white male teachers interact more effectively with black boys than do white females?

- What are some ways that discipline can be non-destructive to the male ego?

- Are there techniques that work well with boys in general?

STUDENT SURVEY:
Males Ages 6-11

Grade _____ Age ____ Race _____

1. When do you feel best about yourself? (check one)
   - ☐ when you're in school
   - ☐ when you're at home
   - ☐ when you're in the neighborhood?

2. What do you like best about school?_____
   _____
   What do you like best about home? _____
   _____
   What do you like best about your neighborhood? _____
   _____

3. If you could change one thing in your school, what would that be? _____

4. Do you think you are smart? ☐yes ☐no Why or why not? _____
   _____

5. Have any of your teachers believed you were smart? _____
   If so, in what grades? check off: ☐ Kindergarten ☐1st
   ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th

6. What do you want to do when you grow up? _____
   _____

7. Who would you like to be like when you grow up? _____
   _____

8. What makes a good teacher? _____
   _____

Optional for Grades 4 and 5

9. List the grade(s) in school where you felt pretty good about yourself and about learning? check off: ☐ Kindergarten ☐1st
   ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th

Some Theories or Themes in Multicultural Education

As we looked at Multiculturalism in our school last year, one of the controversies that developed resulted from conflict between various desires for immediate action and various other desires to move with caution, preserving what was valuable and already in place at our school as well as examining carefully the credentials of whatever new programs, methods, or systems might be added. At some points, it seemed that multicultural and experiential education were incompatible with each other, that teaching of skills was a key issue that could not be resolved. The literature reviewed here shows that there is a lot to be learned and that much of what we at Dickinson already know is on the right track.

Question: What can we learn from programs already developed and tried in other parts of the country? What benefit can we glean from those efforts?

Method of Research: With the exception of a taped interview with Lisa Delpit (by Debi Miles), all my research was done in the periodicals collections of Ramsey Library at UNCA.

By far the most often repeated advice was for teachers to get to know their children and their families well, and to be flexible and resourceful enough to teach to the child's' needs, including skills in context and ethnocentric views of history, literature, and culture. Sara Bullard, editor of Teaching Tolerance (see Resource List in Appendix), put it this way in an article for Educational Leadership (December 1991 / January 1992):

Rather than wait for the outcome of the debate, perhaps it's better if teachers make their own honest efforts to build diverse communities in the classroom, using the research that makes sense and their own best instincts. ... Care about their children. Teach them to care about each other. Show them hatred hurts. Show them how to think critically. Open up new worlds to them. Offer them the tools of change. Create a caring community in the classroom. (p 7)

Following is a summary of some things going on in schools or school systems around the country.

Afrocentrism:

Regular subjects are taught, but the perspective is through the eyes of an African or African American. In any lesson African or African American references and topics come up as naturally as they do in African American homes. Probably the biggest differences from Eurocentric classes are in the areas of history and literature. A teacher would translate Afrocentrism to ethnocentrism to fit the ethnic make-up of the particular class. Molefe Asante is very convincing when he describes the benefits of "centering" the child. Most criticism is of the distortion that takes place in extreme cases, and there are actually two views of Afrocentrism. In one view lessons are taught with a look through the eyes of an African American child who, for example, might be more likely to ride a city bus to shop downtown than to drive to the mall for ice-cream. In other views Africa is placed at the center of the curriculum and all is taught from there. (see African American Immersion and Portland) (Asante, Gill, Marshall, Martel, Oliver)

African American Immersion Schools:

Curriculum is infused with African American content to the exclusion of other content. They have been compared to the Jewish Day Schools or Yeshivot (Gill). Achievement is high, but there is criticism that the children aren't equipped to deal with situations outside their own culture (Delores Greene in ASCD Update). (ASCD Update, Barto, Gill, Leake, Scherer)

All Black Male Classes:

The one I read about were successful. Willie J Wright in Dade County, Florida, reports higher test scores and excellent attendance (Wright). At Matthew Henson School in Baltimore the class stays together for more than one year. (Viadero, "Father Figure").

Marva Collins:

In her private school for African Americans in Chicago she exhibits high expectations for students, high rates of time on task, minimal competition, cooperative group activities, strong adult leadership with room for student choices and responsibility. The atmosphere in the classroom strongly resembles the traditional African American family and church. Community language patterns and behaviors are part of the classroom. Hollins suggests that the frequent use of poetry, Shakespeare, builds a foundation for the use of standard English. (Hollins, Villegas)

Comer Schools:

Those in New Haven have been very successful where the original support team from Yale was available to assess needs and plan remedies. Transfer to other cities has been very difficult. In Seattle the presenters from New Haven were ineffective, and while the Seattle representatives came back from New Haven with great enthusiasm, they were unable to effectively inspire their colleagues. The success of the program depends on being able to get staff and parents working together to determine the needs of the children and how best to address those needs. In New Haven the teachers were given paid time to develop experiential programs (like a classroom store and bank) to address identified social needs of the children. **Some interesting details:**

- There was money to pay some parents to work at the school.
- Comer's thinking parallels Dewey's organically connecting schools to their communities.
- The three general guidelines are no-fault policy, not to paralyze the principal's authority, and consensus decision making.
- The social climate of the school is of prime importance.
- Comer advocates two years with the same teacher to build a strong relationship with a mature adult.
- They didn't use parents in the academic support area unless appropriate, but used them in the social support area. (Brandt, Comer, Payne, Seattle)

Lisa Delpit:

Lisa Delpit is a teacher trained in experiential education who, as she noticed how unsuccessful most of the black children were in her classroom, found herself bringing back some "traditional" methods ("Skills"). She mentions bringing in some desks, writing on the board, practicing handwriting. Her reflections and conversations with other black teachers has led her to recommend teaching reading and writing skills in context (Skills p. 384, Conversation p. 542). She expresses concern that if African American children are encouraged to write in their community language and are not taught the conventions of edited English, then they will not learn to write in standard, edited English. (Delpit, Language Arts, Miles)

Leslie Minarek:

Leslie Minarek is a beginning teacher in Richmand, California, who, trained in experiential learning and literature-based reading, noticed one African American boy who was doing all the activities, but was not learning to read. In her process of remedying the problem she found value in teaching skills, sometimes isolated, within the context of her literature-based program. (Hollingsworth)

Portland Oregon Schools

This system's multicultural plan has involved the compiling of "baseline essays" explaining the world contributions of six major geo-cultural groups: African American (completed), American Indian, Hispanic American, Asian American, Pacific Island American, and European American. Georgia State professor Asa Hilliard III, has supervised the writing of the African American Baseline Essay, which has been adopted in Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, and Indianapolis. The accuracy of this essay is under tremendous controversy with many scalars disputing the validity of statements presented in the essay as facts. (Martel, O'Neill)

Dorothy Strickland:

A professor of Education at Columbia University, her name came up at Dickson last year as an African American teacher of African American children who advocates and finds success in literature-based reading instruction. In her search with four teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia, she looked especially for evidence that skills were being learned by the students. That evidence was found and is documented in her article for LANGUAGE ARTS, February, 1989. (Strickland)

Other Programs:

There are, of course, many other programs in schools across the country, and references to information on these programs can be found in the bibliography. Of special interest may be the programs in North Carolina, especially Durham county and Chapel Hill / Carrboro. It's also important to note that in Seattle, WA, programs that were forced on the schools by top-down mandate were not so successful. Around the country successful programs involved parents and staff in the developing and planning.

Conclusion:

We want to know what to do. We want to be able to look at what other folks have done and take the good and throw out the bad and design a program for ourselves that will be better than any before. It won't work that way. Each school, each community has to hammer out its own needs and desires and from that reflection, come to something workable. I come to this as a teacher and my questions will be a teacher's questions:

Are all the children in the class learning?
For each child who is not, why not?
What can I do differently for that child?
How can I learn what to do?

All of our questions together will form the shape of our program.

Influence of Teacher Expectations on Student Achievement

We can whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far (Ron Edmonds).

The focus of this research is the influence of teacher expectations on the academic performance of students. For children to achieve their full potential they need to expect success and put forth their best effort. Children need to receive expectation messages that, while realistic, are challenging. The teacher plays important roles in the lives of children. Major roles in an individual's life, are critical to that individual formation of self-expectations.

William Ayers said, "In fact good teaching is a continuous search, ongoing inquiry into students and learning, and an endless engagement with a basic question: Given What I now know, how will I teach this student?"

Questions Raised During Research

1. Are educators prepared to deal with students of different cultures?
2. Are low-achieving students encouraged to excel?
3. Are expectations of students demonstrated through overt teacher behavior?

Research

"It is worth while, accordingly, to say something about the way in which the adult can exercise the wisdom his own wider experience gives him without imposing a merely external control. On one side it is his business to be on the alert to see what attitudes and habitual tendencies are being created. In this direction he must, if he is an educator be able to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental. He must, in addition, have that sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals which gives him an idea of what is actually going on in the minds of those who are learning." (John Dewey)

Research on teacher and school effectiveness indicates that higher expectations for student achievement are part of a pattern of differential attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors characterizing teachers and schools that are effective in maximizing their students' learning gains. This resource document reviews research that indicates how differential treatment by teachers may negatively affect the behavior and learning of students for whom there are low expectations. The effect of negative teacher behaviors is that low-expectation students are given fewer opportunities

to interact and participate in classroom activities, and as a result make less effort to get the teacher's attention, gradually withdrawing psychologically from learning in the classroom setting. (Barbara – Richman)

Guidelines for effectively teaching minority students in grades K-6 are presented in the manual: **Every Child Deserves a Change,** which is divided into six sections. Each section presents a different teaching principle, explains the rationale behind it, and provides a list of suggestions and/or comments from teachers. They are for grades K-6. The six principles are:

1. Every child can learn if you have high expectations for all of your students.
2. Every child can learn if you approach instruction systematically with clear goals and objectives – emphasizing time-on-task and achievement.
3. Every child can learn if your instructions are multiculturally based.
4. Every child can learn if you accurately assess student achievement and use that data appropriately.
5. Every child can learn if you establish a positive classroom climate that includes maintaining firm, fair, and consistent discipline practices.
6. Every child can learn if you establish a positive home-school relationship.

Teachers need to be skillful communicators who are sensitive to and knowledgeable about the complexities of the teaching- learning process and the pricelessness of every young life. In fact, literature abound with support for the fact that teachers, in most cases, base their expectations on performance indicators and accurately communicate these realistic expectations to their students.

A difficulty arises, however, when teachers must deal with students who are in some way different from themselves. Differences filter the expectation cues and complicate the situation. Too often, "different" is translated as "less valuable" signals enter the system. Clear communications based on ability are contaminated by unconscious doubts, threats and fears. (Shirley McConnell)

The purpose of this study was to broaden the existing field of teacher expectation research by answering the following questions about teacher expectations:

1. How do teachers in early childhood education develop expectations for student success and failure within the classroom social system?
2. What are the stereotypes of the "good" and "bad" student?
3. How are these expectations and stereotypes reflected in the daily life of young children
4. How do teacher expectations for the model or ideal student affect the development and implementation of he basic curriculum?

Investigators observed the phenomenon of teacher expectations in kindergarten and first grade classes, interviewed teachers, and conducted group interviews with students. They concluded that:

1. The formation and maintenance of teacher expectations were influenced significantly by
   a. personal and past history of teachers and students
   b. traditional role descriptions of teachers, students, and the curriculum
   c. society and individual needs
2. Teacher expectations strongly influenced the daily activities of young children in the classroom
3. the teacher's ideal student profile and the curriculum influenced and shaped each other

Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Why are you a teacher?
2. When did you first become interested in being a teacher?
3. What was your early childhood educational experiences like? Describe them.
4. What can it mean to be a teacher? What is the ideal teacher?
5. What do you expect of yourself as a teacher and what should parents and students expect of you?
6. What do you expect of your students, generally?
7. Can you think of any student in your classroom who you would describe as a "good" student?
8. Describe a "good" student.
9. What makes a "good" student?
10. Does a student's behavior or their academic success determine whether they are a "good" student?
11. what is important to success in your classroom?
12. How would you define school ability in your classroom?
13. Can you think of any students in your classroom who could be described as "bad" students?

14. What makes a student "bad" or unsuccessful in your classroom?
15. How do you explain the phenomenon of "good" and "bad" students? Why do you think we have "good" and "bad" students?

Individual Student Interview Questions:

1. Have you ever heard the term "good" student?
2. If so, what is a "good" student?
3. How do you get to be a "good" student?
4. Are you a "good" student?
5. How do you know?
6. Have you ever heard the term "bad" student?
7. What is a "bad" student?
8. Have you ever been a "bad" student?
9. Why?
10. How could we help all students to be "good"?

"Teachers must know their students, reach out to them with care and understanding in order to create a bridge from the not-yet known. Teaching that is more than incidental, more than accidental, demands sustained empathetic regard. This is where teaching begins. Teaching is in fact initially the art of invitation. It is virtually impossible to invite people to learn if they are strange or inscrutable to you. Teachers find ways to know and understand learners. They observe and record students at work and at play. They create dialogue. They inquire." (William Ayers)

Summary:

The research indicates that low expectation students are seated farther from the teacher, are praised less frequently for success, are called on less frequently to respond to questions, are provided with less wait time. Differential treatment of low-expectation students influence the academic performance of students.

Recommendations:

Recommendations for addressing differential treatment of low-expectation students begins with the administration. Why? Because student expectation is related to equality in the classroom. The administrators of a system are the models for the system. When the administrators value equality they require equality in the classroom.

Conclusion:

To value all students, to teach all students, to respect all students, to help all students and to treat all students fairly, is what equality in the classroom is. **Equality is the Mother of high expectation for All Children.**

Teaching Philosophy and Methodology: Multiculturalism as a Key Component

Introduction

Is there an educational philosophy that truly fits all children? What teaching methods are most effective for all children? What effects do culture and languages have on learning? How do children's home and community cultures relate to their school culture? How does this relationship effect success in school? Can and should teaching methods be adapted to a knowledge and understanding of children's home and community cultures?

These questions led to the research concerning multicultural awareness and its impact on teaching philosophies and methods. The research primarily involved reading, which included books, articles, and essays ranging in topics from specific program descriptions, to theories on educational philosophy, to anthropological studies of race and culture. I also drew upon thirteen years of classroom experience in four countries with vastly different cultures, and ages ranging from pre-school through university.

Overview

Given the diversity that is present in school populations, there can not be a single educational philosophy or set of teaching methods that will ensure success for all students. Philosophy and methods must arise out of the needs of the children within each school, based on knowledge and understanding of the home and community cultures that children bring with them into the school culture. This knowledge and understanding can best be gained by communication with parents and other community members, and by personal and classroom involvement in the cultures of our children.

Research Finding

Changes in teaching philosophies and teaching methods usually take place because a need is found. Examination of weaknesses, a desire to find a solution to existing problems, leads to new theories and practices. Too often in education, these "new" philosophies and methods is hailed as "the" solution and are embraced in entirety, while the "old" philosophies and methods are completely overthrown, the good with the bad, the strengths along with the weaknesses. This continuous throwing over of the old for the new, repeatedly for decades, has led to what educational philosophers have called the pendulum effect - because so often what

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was "new" forty years ago may have become "new" again twenty years ago, and what was "new thirty year ago may have become what is "new" now.

This does not imply that change is bad, that progress is ineffectual, that solutions to problems in education should not be sought. The implication is that perhaps our perception of problems and our resultant changes have had too broad a scope. Nationwide problems perceived by nationwide achievement data have led to nationwide philosophies and methods based on nationwide norms and expectations. Yet each school is faced with its own set of problems that may not "fit in" with the nationwide norm in every aspect. Perhaps it is time for individual schools to examine their own problems and seek solutions, to make changes in philosophy and methods based on their own student population rather than on generalized national norms, to have as a goal the success of each and every child within that school.

Following are a few examples of schools that are attempting to focus in on and solve their own particular problems by examining their own students, the home and community cultures of these students, and how they relate to the school culture.

1. **Place:** Milwaukee, Wisconsin
   Problem: Lack of self-esteem and academic achievement in African-American male students
   Solution: Formation of an elementary school and a middle school as African-American Immersion Schools
   Goal: To raise self-esteem and self-awareness of students by filling social, emotional and academic needs
   Methods:
   a. students meet each day with a black male "student advocate" from the community
   b. scheduling is restructured to allow longer periods of time for instruction
   c. no more than twenty students in a class
   d. parenting workshops
   e. daily mentoring sessions

2. **Place:** Walled Lake, Michigan
   Problem: Lack of interest and achievement in African-American students
   Solution: Formation of mission statement for school "Together We Can" and new focus

Goal: To increase cultural awareness and communication, and to increase achievement in African-American students

Methods:
a. formation of volunteer "buddy" program for minority students
b. assemblies and staff in-service focusing on prejudice and cultural awareness
c. parent education
d. regular joint staff assessment of instructional methods that are and are not working for all students

3. Place: Baltimore, Maryland

Problem: lack of achievement in African-American male students

Solution: formation of one class in the elementary school consisting of 27 African-American male students with an African-American male teacher

Goal: to increase motivation and academic achievement in African-American male students

Methods:
a. frequent visits to boys' homes
b. rewarding achievement with after-school and weekend outings with the teacher
c. use of competitive group work in class because of boys' natural inclination to team sports
d. use of frequent class discussions about respect, responsibility, and self-control
e. emphasis on a sense of direction for boys' lives -- expanding their realms of possibility

4. Place: Durham County, North Carolina

Problem: low achievement in African-American students

Solution: Staff training and implementation program called, "Education Everybody's Children: Developing Culturally Literate Leaders"

Methods:
a. all staff, including support staff, involved
b. use of cooperative groups in classes, because a study of the local African-American community revealed that the children are more group-oriented
c. involve minority support staff as role models in the classroom

5. Place: Hawaii
   Problem: Polynesian children not participating and not achieving
   Solution: Creation of "Kamehameha Project" - teachers going to parents and Polynesian community to study culture (King Kamehameha the Great was the Hawaiian King from 1782-1819. He united the Hawaiian islands, welcomed progress and new ideas, but zealously guarded Hawaiian customs and religion and maintained Hawaiian independence during a time of Western colonial expansion.)
   Goal: To increase participation and achievement in Polynesian students
   Methods:
   a. implement peer learning centers, because the teachers discovered that Polynesian families siblings are responsible for each other
   b. implement joint student discussion and oral responses to questions and comments during reading time, because the teachers discovered that joint oral narration is a common tradition in Polynesian culture

6. Place: Piedmont, South Carolina
   Problem: African-American students not responding to questions asked by teachers in classrooms
   Solution: Teachers going to parents and community to find answers and solutions
   Goal: to increase student involvement and responses
   Methods: Teachers discovered that the adults in this African-American community did not consider young children appropriate conversational partners. The adults issued directives to children, and only asked questions of them if they wanted information ("Where have you been?") or if they wanted to make analogies ("You see that guy on the corner? What will happen to you if you don't do well in school?") . These teachers learned that their students were not responding, not because they didn't know the answers, but because they didn't understand questions requiring a display of academic knowledge or opinion. They knew that the teachers already knew the answers, so why were they asking the questions?

The teachers at this school re-evaluated their methods of teaching, specifically of assessing by questioning for knowledge and opinion. They revised the frequency and type of questioning. Questioning became more analogical in nature, and was often replaced altogether by self-discovery and expression on the part of the students.

7. **Place:** Long Island, New York
   Problem: predominantly white, Christian school with almost no cultural diversity
   Solution: creation of "The Human Rights Education Program"
   Goal: to increase students' cultural awareness and social responsibility
   Methods:
   a. cross-cultural simulation games and role playing
   b. cross-school exchanges
   c. community service projects in day care programs, nursing homes, schools for handicapped
   d. use of multicultural literature
   e. cooperative learning, so that students learn to work together toward common goals and learn to recognize and value each others' qualities
   f. Peacemakers Programs, in which peer mediators help other children find peaceful solutions to problems
   g. implementing the belief that student empowerment and multicultural education are inextricably linked, and that they necessitate social responsibility

Analysis of Research

These schools, along with many others across the country, have a good deal in common:

1. They all recognized an urgent need – there were many students in their schools who were not learning.
2. The majority of the children who were not learning were of a particular ethnic or cultural group -- the Polynesian children in Hawaii, the African-American children in the Piedmont, the white upper-middle-class children in New York.

3. Teachers and administrators did not place blame for the problem or pass judgments about their students or about their own teaching methods. Instead, they worked together.
4. In order to gain insight into the classroom behavior of the children, the teachers compared school participation patterns to how learning occurs in the children's home culture.
5. Teachers recognized that every child brings the culture and language of his or her own community to school. If the home culture and language correspond to what is expected in the school culture, the children have an advantage in the learning process. If the school culture clashes with the home culture, with the expectations of home and community, then three is already a major obstacle to learning.
6. Teachers realized that, although they could not duplicate the cultural conditions of every home community they had to have a personal awareness of parents and home community culture to help them guide the students more successfully.
7. Teachers recognized that they could not rely on a single philosophy or set of teaching methods if they hoped to be successful in a multicultural setting.
8. Teachers realized that successful instructional strategies must be based on learning methods familiar to children. In order to learn of these methods, teachers have to become familiar with children's home and community culture.
9. These programs are still in existence and are meeting with success, because they were developed from specific needs and special knowledge.

What these schools do not have in common are the solutions and methods used to help solve the problems. There are certainly some similarities, but the differences reflect the necessity of focusing in on the needs of the children within each school community, the necessity of studying the home and community culture of these particular children, the necessity of adapting philosophies and methods so that all children can feel comfortable in their school culture and thereby have an equal chance at success.

Conclusion

How do all these findings from research relate to our school? The central educational philosophy of our school is experiential. This experiential philosophy has certain values pertaining to effective teaching methods, which include:

Active learning (learning by doing)
process-oriented learning
whole language
literature based reading
writing process
student empowerment
peer tutoring
non-competitive learning
cooperative groups
parent involvement

Many of the schools across the country that are changing their philosophies and methods based on their multicultural awareness are implementing methods that our school has practiced for several years -- and these schools are meeting with success in their new methods. However, they did not adopt these methods from an educational ideology or philosophy as much as they **created** these methods themselves, as a direct result of cultural consciousness and conscientiousness.

The student population at Isaac Dickson bears a striking resemblance to many of the schools studied in this research. If our schools were examined in the same way, how do you think the plan would look? How would we fill in the missing parts?

Place: Asheville, NC

Problem: lack of self-esteem and academic achievement among African-American students

Solution: _____
_____
_____

Goal: to raise self-esteem and academic achievement among African-American students

Methods:
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

Within another decade, it is projected that 95% of all public school teachers will be white while over 40% of the students in every school will be minority. Research indicated that it is time now for all students, including our own, to begin asking some vital questions and acting on the answers to these questions:

- Are all children in our school successful in learning?
- Do all children understand and feel comfortable in their school culture?
- What do our parents want for their children?
- How can we balance what parents want with what we as professionals believe?
- How can we learn more about the home and community cultures of our students?
- How can we use what we have learned about culture to ensure that all children are comfortable in their school culture?
- How can we adapt our philosophy and teaching methods to our new knowledge of culture and its effect on learning?

Parent-Home School Relations

It is of great importance to have good **communications** between the parents / care-givers and the school. We must gain their **respect** and **trust,** if we are able to create a good working relationship. We need to find ways to reach all our parents, regardless of ethnic, religious, gender, cultural, racial or other disabilities.

The methods of research I used were books, ERIC search, magazines, telecommunications on Prodigy, written correspondence, and observation of other cultures (mall observation).

Some of the questions rose were:

1. What has been done in other schools?
2. What kinds of questions can we as educators ask our parents?
3. How can we build trust in our home-school relationships?
4. What kinds of bias do we have, and how can we separate and learn from all our parents?
5. How can we make sure parents understand the written and verbal messages sent home by teachers and their children?

On the basis of readings and other **types** of research, I am presenting some ideas from multicultural pilot programs regarding school relations with parents. Some of the ideas ***may*** be helpful in creating a better climate for teachers, parents and school personnel. The following are examples of attempts to reach parents.

Social Skills

We need to establish a sense of trust between parents and teachers. At the King School, in New Haven, Connecticut (largely low-income African American parents and largely middle income white teachers), they set up a **social skills program.** Ten parents were hired for *three* hours a day, all year as assistants. They set up a variety of committees that the parents were to be a part of. It turned out to be *thirty-four* hours per month but they found they really ended up working *fifty-six* hours per month. In terms of parents, he found they need to know their child is respected and is being educated; they need to feel **socially comfortable** in the school environment and they need to **contribute to the school** in a way that makes them feel important. (Comer, James. School Power)

Social Skills / Community Needs

An elementary school once set in an upper middle class neighborhood was moved into an area right in the midst of a housing project. The teachers were not having any success in getting parents to participate in any school activities, so they began a two year project to help build respect and trust from the parents. They hired a home-school coordinator and began to research what their community needed.

They used a pyramid of needs from clothing, heat, food and shelter with emotional needs on the top of the pyramid. They discovered the reason parents wouldn't go to school functions was due to matters of their own safety and the safety of their home. Once they found out what the community needed, they began to educate the parents by first assessing their needs, next helped them write letters to government agencies for help, then taught them how to ask for help. After two years of dedication to this project, the results were: improved scores and school work, great parent involvement, and parent / child / teacher relationships improved. (NCAYE convention - Greensboro - contact: Sandra Doyle)

Child Centered Home Visits

At the Early Childhood Research Center-State University in Buffalo, NY, they are using a **child centered approach** to home visits. Home visits are a means of involving parents in the educational process of their children. They developed a program with the help of the parent(s). The purpose of this type of home visit is to get to know the child better and to reinforce the child's self-esteem.

During open house is a good time to introduce the idea of home visits. The teacher might explain his/her desire to visit each child to develop the personal side of the teaching relationship. The teacher should ask permission of the parent(s) to visit their child. They found that the best time frame is **one hour.**

In order to have a successful visit, **the teacher must have the ability to accept different homes and families** and to focus on **enjoying the child.** This will hopefully build bridges from the home and school.
Using child centered home visits they found the following results:

1. Increased parent involvement
2. Enhanced children's self-esteem
3. Supported the curriculum

31

4. Helped alleviate communication difficulties for some bilingual families at the center

Follow-up of the home visit includes circle-time discussion at school in which the teacher and child share the home visit with the class. If there is a situation that does not warrant a home visit, perhaps the teacher can either invite the child and his/her parent(s) to their home for a short visit or suggest a brief outing at a favorite place of the child's.

Even though the visit is child-centered, there are positive aspects for parents. The visit allows parents an opportunity to communicate with the teacher without the restriction of the school. *If the teacher is open, informal and listens carefully, the parents may develop more respect and trust for the teacher and school.*(Young Children, July, 1992 pp. 45-50)

Parents Needs / Questionnaire

At the Ithan Elementary School in Bryn Mawr, PA, a school district's international coordinator and a primary school teacher of 20 second graders from 10 different ethnic groups implemented a practicum designed to improve the understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity among students, parents, and teachers. They looked at their weaknesses, developed in-service workshops for teachers, read research, implemented and coordinated lessons, and evaluated change. Evaluation data indicated improved multicultural understanding and sensitivity among teacher and students, and increased parents' comfort in the school.

The parents attended bi-monthly meetings, where they discussed homework; expectations of teachers; grading; behavior; handbook of rules and procedures; and personnel to see regarding particular problems and concerns. The parents attended the **International Club Meetings** on a voluntary basis and were offered suggestions to help them become a more integral part of the school community. As the programs progressed and they believed they were contributing to the school in a small but important way, the group gained confidence. There were opportunities for parents to see guest speakers. (Steele, Bonnie-Blandy 1989)

Attached, find a **sample** parent questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness regarding the skills one has for adapting to the school environment. It could be used in the beginning of the school year and at the end. Whatever is used, it is very important not to make the family member uncomfortable. The results should be used for the benefit of the parents.

Questionnaire

The following questions are for parents, step-parents, guardians and primary care-givers of our students at Isaac Dickson Elementary School. This will help us evaluate the effectiveness regarding the skills one has for adapting to the school environment.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Do you enjoy coming into the school building?	☐	☐	☐
2. Do you know whom to contact if you are having a problem with your child's school work?	☐	☐	☐
3. Do you know how to help your child with his/her assignments?	☐	☐	☐
4. Do you know the physical layout of the building?	☐	☐	☐
5. Do you understand your responsibilities as a parent in this school?	☐	☐	☐
6. Do you enjoy presenting to small groups of students?	☐	☐	☐
7. Can you read the material sent home?	☐	☐	☐
8. Do you enjoy volunteering in the library?	☐	☐	☐
9. Do you understand the grading system?	☐	☐	☐
10. Do you understand the student handbook or rules and procedures?	☐	☐	☐

Questionnaire

The following questions are for parents, step-parents, guardians and primary care-givers of our students at Isaac Dickson Elementary School. Please help us give them their best year yet!

1. What educational goals do you have for your child (children) in school this year?

Reading: _____
_____
_____

Writing: _____
_____
_____

Math: _____
_____
_____

Science: _____
_____
_____

Social Studies: _____
_____
_____

Others: _____
_____

2. Do you feel clear that your child (children) understand(s) how to do homework? ☐YES ☐NO

   Can you help them? ☐YES ☐NO

   If not, do you have a place to go to or call if you need help? ☐YES ☐NO

3. What other needs or goals do you have for your child (children) this year?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Do you feel comfortable coming to the classroom and school activities? ☐YES ☐NO
   If not, what could we do to help?

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What do you need from the school or community to help create stronger ties from the home to the school?

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. Do you have any other suggestions or questions?

   _____
   _____
   _____

Mentor Program

The idea of a **mentor** program could be very helpful. This is where someone in the community could act as a mentor (positive role model) and supporter during hard times. This could be used for students, teachers and parents if they wanted to participate.

Reading ability turned out to be one the best predictors of later success, both at work and in marital and parenting relationships. Most who developed serious problems had demonstrated **reading difficulty by third grade.** One way to help these students is tutoring by peers or adult volunteers. (Instructor. May, June 1992, p. 12)

Information Parents Should Have Access To

Information is essential for effective parent participation. Parents must be informed or they are vulnerable to manipulation or misdirection.
Parents should have access to documents and information concerning:

1. Children's and parent's rights (student handbook)
2. An educational rationale for parental involvement
3. Pertinent laws, guidelines and district policies as a compliment to the specifics of program proposals, budgets and evaluation reports.
4. Information on particular issues (Cross-Cultural Literacy, 1992 p 46,47)

Language Structure

By the time children go to school they know the sounds, words and grammatical systems of language spoken around them. Yet their caregiver's use of space and time as well as their talk and games differ greatly. Children come to school bearing the high hopes (expectations) of their parents and believing school can make a difference in whether they learn enough and enable them to move beyond their parents' workplaces. We need to find ways to make accessible to teachers an **understanding of the differences in language and culture their students bring to their classrooms.**

Teachers need to record carefully (keep journals) their classroom practices and behaviors and modify them appropriately with the training **resources** that the school administrators provide. They can begin to record carefully the features of their own student's language structures and uses. (Ways With Words, p 265)

Assumptions

There are assumptions we make about the school, family members, and community environment that we need to become aware of and begin to address. You might want to start your own list in a journal and continually assess it.

1. The home of the child has the same expectations as the school .
2. The parent can read and / or write.
3. The child brings things home and returns them back to school.
4. The child understands what he/she needs to do and can communicate it to their care-giver.
5. Clear instructions were given in terms that the child understands.
6. Follow up is made with the parents and community.
7. What does the guardian want for their child?
8. Teachers are familiar with and respect the culture of their student and parent.
9. The parent trusts and respects the teacher and the school system.
10. The parent feels comfortable participating in conferences, meetings and expressing their needs.

The African-American Parent Needs

We need to be careful about **labeling** parents who don't attend meetings and/or participate in school functions as uninterested in their children. We need to recognize that regular daily living responsibilities take up a lot of their time.

A balanced parental-involvement program should *share information* with the parents that will assist them in their struggle for *survival and achievement.* A program should neither slander nor romanticize the parents.

Seminars should be offered in child development and learning theory so that caregivers and teachers can compliment each other's efforts. There should also be opportunities for seminars in African and Afro-American studies for parents. (Black Children Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles 1986 pp.174, 175)

Native Americans

In a document containing summaries of papers and discussion at a 1985 symposium on exceptional American Indian children and youth, some of the items mentioned were:

1. **Parents need to be involved in the entire school program.**
2. There seems to be a need for **better testing.** As stated by a parent: " When my son was tested, he was expected to identify pictures of a carpenter; however, carpenters on the reservation do not dress like those in the pictures." p. 3.
3. **Parents want to be involved.**
4. Parents are not a homogeneous group (Unfortunately, we tend to treat them as if they are all alike).
5. **Time is a precious commodity for parents.**
6. **Burnout - don't overwork willing parents.**

The school personnel need to be warm and accepting in how they relate to the parents. In many instances the school needs to initiate contact with Indian parents in a manner **consistent with local customs.** A written notice or invitation could go unnoticed or misinterpreted, while a home visit by a sensitive person fluent in the language of the parents could prove more beneficial. This needs to be on-going throughout the year. Other ways of encouraging Indian parent involvement include:
Sponsoring social activities
Offering classes (child nutrition)
Providing transportation to meetings and arranging for child care
Inviting parents to be guest speakers

Again, parents must be provided **clear** and **concise** information on existing legal requirements. If the information is provided in written form, it should be in a vocabulary understandable to the average parent in that particular community. Educators need to be sensitive to and aware of other family, community, and tribal responsibilities that may be a priority. (ERIC-American Indian Exceptional Children and Youth 1987)

Telecommunications

Children, parents, and educators can communicate across **cultural barriers** by using telecommunications. At Isaac Dickson School, the third, fourth and fifth graders have used the National Geographic Programs for the past two years. They learned about kids and schools in other areas of the country and hopefully at some point will have access to **global communications.** During this research project I used "Prodigy" to gain

access to bulletin boards. I received responses from parents and educators across the country. Some of the interesting responses were:

1. Check with the nearest chapter of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith-They have a program called **"A World of Differences."** (series of workshops to help teachers create awareness in children)
2. **Family Tree** (for the children who are uncomfortable or not happy they can do a family cube or a family mosaic)
3. **National Geographic American History Atlas** - regional parts of US
4. Population Research Bureau has great information -Demographics and **ethnic maps**
5. Have parents and anyone in the community who wants to share some of their background through music, dance, culinary delights, games come in to the school for the day. It 's called, **"The World Around Us."** Children pick from a variety of things like African Story Telling, Irish Dancing, Learn to say a word in Spanish, Native American Children's Games, etc.
6. One parent wanted public schools to publish a **"Bill of Rights" for parents** every time their child is enrolled in a school, outlining exactly what is available to parents in case of a dispute.
7. What actions are considered inappropriate in the classroom, what is considered illegal, and how an irresponsible teacher can be replaced?
8. **"Facing History and Ourselves"** offers a curriculum that is basically anti-racist and uses the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide as case studies. "Choosing to Participate" is one of its component.
9. Some schools in the LA area are using a program called **"Second Step."** It teaches children to have empathy for others by communicating, and using other skills such as body language and relating to own experiences.
10. **Two evening conference periods** were instituted for working parents.
11. **Voice mail system** where parents can call each day to find out items of school wide interest and also what is happening in individual classrooms.
12. The schools need to **re-empower the parents and the parents' important role as educators of their own children.**

In conclusion, it is imperative that we, as educators and parents, find ways to communicate with, and comfortably link, the school and home.

READING MULTICULTURALLY

What are the issues involved in developing and putting a multicultural curriculum into place? The most obvious is the charge that multiculturalism is political ideology rather than content for study. An additional charge is that a multicultural curriculum is simply means to an African American curriculum intended to browbeat Anglo-Saxon Protestants for the atrocities of slavery. Furthermore, opponents charge any curriculum with explicit political objectives is inappropriate. Instead, they feel that school are charged with providing a culturally neutral curriculum.

On the other side, proponents of multicultural education ask if a curriculum in which European American, middle class experience is featured as the "norm" or the "standard" thereby marginalizing all other experience, is "culturally neutral?" They question whether the routine under representation of people of color tells anyone the "truth" about our society?

Among the aims of a multicultural curriculum are:

1. Giving a more complete view of life in the contemporary US.
2. Providing material that reflects the "normality" and richness of the lives of people of color.
3. Providing material that will engage the minds and heats of hitherto under-represented groups, thus combating low academic achievement scores.
4. Providing all children opportunities to learn about other cultures as preparation for the changing demographics of the twenty-first century.

James Banks, in his article "Integrating the Curriculum with Ethnic Content," describes four categories or stages which characterize the development of a Multicultural curriculum:

(1) contributions, where the lives of the most famous, least controversial figures are studied
(2) ethnic additive, where material about people of color is woven in on special occasions, like Martin Luther king Day
(3) transformation, where all lessons are examined for the perspective of the key groups involved, Columbus Day from the perspective of the conquered people as well as the conquerors
(4) social action, where a component of the lesson involves helping children apply what they've learned to the world they inhabit.

But the primary concern is simply to develop a curriculum that includes a more accurate reflection of the real diversity in the world. At least one effective way of meeting that goal of a multicultural curriculum is through literature.

Literature remains a rich resource for teaching diverse populations about diverse cultures. It is true now as it has ever been that being drawn into the stories of other people and other cultures is one of the best ways to learn about them. Teachers have known that for centuries. This is a concept especially honored in a school whose methodology includes whole language learning. What then do teachers already committed to print rich classrooms where reading is an activity enthusiastically engaged in need to know about pursuing reading from a multicultural perspective? Isn't is simply a matter of choosing books that reflect the diversity of races and classes? In the search for new material, isn't it sufficient to rely on book reviews from reliable sources? When a teacher is exploring material from cultures outside her own, the answer is "NO". There are additional concerns she must be aware of. Even the best intentioned teacher, though an avid and enthusiastic reader she may be herself, may need to rethink or periodically check her book selections from a multicultural perspective. The teacher must periodically determine not only if diversity is well represented, but how. Furthermore, she should examine how she is using these texts to teach critical reading and thinking to her students. Banks recommends **Guidelines for Selecting Bias Free Textbooks and Storybooks** as an aid in that endeavor. In the meantime, following are some beginning guidelines pulled from my reading, my experience as a teacher and parent of color.

Text Selection

First, choosing texts from a Multicultural perspective requires some specific attention. Obviously, look for the highest quality. By doing anything else, you may be revealing your own bias -- a bias that does not expect high quality form materials by and for people of color. Second, especially for the primary grades, search out texts that are brightly colored and compete with the wealth of material targeted at children. Also, examine **all** the books you bring into a classroom as opportunities to teach about different cultures as well as to develop children's critical thinking skills. If you **are** using material that has some major flaw, be careful to point that out in your discussions or have the children examine the work for such a flaw. A good example is the book Follow the Drinking Gourd, an excellent story which introduces slavery and the Underground Railroad to K-3 kids. However, the hero of the story is a white man. Though it is historically accurate that many operators on the Underground Railroad were white

people – Quakers / Friends – in many cases, it is **not** true that the slaves needed someone else to tell them to run away before they took that action as the text implies. Thus, the important information about what the Underground Railroad was and how it operated is nearly undermined by the subtle paternalism of the text.

OLD "FAVORITES"

Another area of concern is using "classic" texts or favorites from your own childhood since many of these predate sensitivity to non-European cultures. For instance, teachers sometimes run into trouble trying to use texts like Little Black Samba or The Uncle Remus Tales. In both cases, the **history** of these texts as sources of negative black stereotyping ("Samba" as a derogatory way of speaking to or about African Americans and the customary dark, dark skin and thick bright red lips of the illustrations or the equally disturbing head scratching, slow talking "uncle" of the Remus tales), can cause real misunderstanding with parents of African American children and humiliate or disturb the children themselves. It helps to remember that there are still relatively few positive and accurate images of African Americans in the public view. Thus the images our children encounter in school, the "official" images are even more critical to developing or dismantling stereotypes. This section can be tricky though. Mercer Mayer has a tale called Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp which I think is wonderful for the strong rhythm of the language, the clear, dramatic and comic characterization, and the engaging, smart female protagonist. But some parents might be offended by its swamp setting, non-standard English speakers and the inclusion of witches, hants, and the devil himself as characters. I'd use it and be prepared for the questions and objections parents might voice. My point is that a teacher should use materials she is familiar with thinks has sufficient merit to outweigh its potential negative effects. But also that if someone raises an objection, voices a concern or if children simply are not engaged by the material, the teacher tries to examine it from the point of view that it might have been offensive. Checking in with a member of the group that might take offense before she uses the material if she has any doubts might save some time and trouble. Learning the history of various groups will also sensitize the teacher about how various ethnic groups have been misrepresented in the public eye.

But, besides choosing quality texts, and racially, ethnically sensitive texts, how can Multicultural literature be used to teach about diversity? Again, James Banks has the helpful Teaching strategies for Ethnic Studies. In addition, Bill Bigelow's "Once Upon a Genocide ...A Review of Christopher Columbus in Children's Literature" provides a model. In this article, he looks at eight biographies of Columbus, from second grade to middle school texts, and critiques them for the attitudes and misinformation they provide about the people who inhabited the lands Columbus claimed. He holds the texts accountable to historical fact and the questions he raises provide a method for examining the hidden messages and underlying assumptions of texts you might want to use. His suggestions for questions to be raised with the kids also demonstrate a means of fostering critical thinking and reading skills. Eileen Oliver in "An Afrocentric Approach to Literature:Putting the Pieces Back Together", demonstrates another way to use the literature. Her teacher . . . orchestrated an analytic reading of the West African "lion and rabbit" legend. Students excitedly pointed out the signifying forms that they recognized form familiar "rap" pieces. They easily picked out images and metaphoric elements. Finally, their teacher led them to a "required" poem from the text . . . first from an Afrocentric point of view and then from the more familiar Eurocentric perspective".

Ultimately, the exploring ethnicity through reading provides us all with mirrors of our own specific cultural context and windows into new ones. That seems to me to be one of the goals of any type of education.

New Perspectives on Minority Achievement

Introduction

It will be one year today that the multicultural program has been in effect at Isaac Dickson School. The goal of the program was to improve academic achievement among African American students. I spent ten months reading articles and research, reviewing curriculum resources, interviewing parents, students, teachers, principals, central office staff and community members. My conclusion was that, although there were many opinions and theories, no one was really sure how minority achievement could be improved, or even assessed. Everyone viewed the problem differently, and suggested different solutions based on their own viewpoint. There was a clear tendency to affix blame, usually to someone other than the speaker.

Minority achievement is and has been the most undesirable and difficult area to research. It seems to start such controversy that, like the term "racism", we simply avoid it. To quote one author, " A major obstacle to that understanding is the way that we usually formulate the problem itself -- roughly as, 'What's the matter with those people?' Such a formulation leads inevitably to some form of deficit hypotheses, leaving only the question of whether the so-called deficit is produced by 'cultural deprivation' in early childhood or by genetic factors. There is little real evidence for either of those interpretations; they persist because of an apparent lack of plausible alternatives." (Neisser, 1986, p.1)

The topics of assessment and achievement are crucial to this discussion because of the many ways the terms are used, and the feelings and philosophies that surface when one uses either of the terms. We become so entangled in debates over these meanings and philosophical beliefs, that the discussions overpower the proceedings.

The perception of achievement is culturally diverse. The African American community has asked the educational institution about minority achievement many times and in many ways just to get the same answer: **tests are not always reliable, and that we are not to put too much emphasis in their results. Yet, to other cultures and communities, high test scores are marks of excellence.** If we are not clear as to the meaning and intent of tests, how can we begin to explain it to parents, students, or other colleagues? How can we measure something before we know more about the subject or the person we're trying to teach?

In an effort to bring order into the discussion, I have formulated a list of questions which seem pertinent to the overall goal of minority achievement.

1. How do we measure achievement?

2. Are California Achievement Tests the only measure of achievement that could be used to validate a program?

3. Are there other measures of achievement that could be used to validate a program?

4. Can we design an instrument to measure success based on the individual child's needs?

5. Are teachers adequately trained to assess performance and prescribe appropriate remedies?

6. Are principals trained specifically on assessment of achievement?

7. Do educational professionals know what specific cultural variables apply to achievement?

8. Are present instruments designed to test academic skills or social skills?

9. How does the staff, central office, and state monitor achievement?

10. Is there a difference between assessment and testing?

11. Are staff development workshops preparing teachers on the specifics involved in raising academic performance?

12. What central support systems -- time, resources, funds -- are in place?

13. Do parents know what skills their children will need, and at what grade they will need them?

14. Are communication skills the same as reading skills?

15. Should all teachers know how to diagnose and prescribe reading remediation?

16. What specific skills will students need to achieve high scores on the "new standardized test"? (end of grade testing)

17. Will all cultural groups have hope for success on the "new standardized test"?

18. Do we rely too heavily on support programs, such as Chapter I, Exceptional Children, etc., to correct learning problems?

19. Do informal assessments, journals, and portfolios, provide parents and students with information in a form that is easily understood?

20. Is the way we teach going to raise minority achievement? Or will the students fall further behind?

21. Are all teachers using the same measurement criteria?

In an effort to at least begin answering these questions, I reviewed literature on the use of assessment instruments. I also reviewed The North Carolina Course of Study, The Basic Education Plan (including the 1992 updates), the Magnet School Theme (Experiential Education), and additional programs at Isaac Dickson School, along with interviewing teachers, parents, students, and central office staff.

New Answers to an Old Question

"Why is the school achievement of American minority children, **especially Black children,** so often below that of their White counterparts? This is obviously a political question as well as an academic one, so political that few social scientists discuss it in public anymore. Privately, many of them still assume that the only possible answers are those offered by the deficiency theories of the 1960's: either genetic inferiority or cultural deprivation. Although these notions seem more than a little old-fashioned, they are still widely accepted at a tacit level. That acceptance can hardly be based on scientific ground; there was never much direct evidence for either notion and they have become even less plausible in light of recent developments. Their persistence today does not reflect their own merits so much as the apparent lack of alternative explanations. Are there any other ways to understand the school performance of minority children?

" Group differences in achievement are products of society as a whole - of American culture. In a sense, these differences are just examples of the effect of culture on cognition." (Neisser, 1986, p.1).

(This particular research comes from a conference sponsored by the Cornell Training Program in Comprehensive Cognitive Psychology. This review is based on research that was presented at the 1982 Cornell conference. Four of the speakers were Black, and four were White. A list of the speakers and their credentials is included in the Appendix.)

An overview of the hypotheses presented at this conference follows:

I. **The effects of caste.** John Ogbu points out that the problem is not specifically an American one: lower - caste groups have poor school records everywhere in the world. Membership in a lower caste implies a limited set of possible adult careers. Black school children are preparing themselves for the roles they expect to play later on.

II. **Black culture and White Hegemony (power).** Wade Boykin describes many aspects of African American culture that are in more or less direct conflict with the social and cognitive structure of the school. He also argues that the schools, like American society as a whole, are structured in ways that maintain the hegemony of the White middle class.

III. **Ineffective Schools.** Ronald Edmonds demonstrates that public schools can be effective in teaching poor and minority children, but that most of them fail to do so. He goes on to document the principle differences between schools that are effective and schools that are not.

IV. **The differential treatment effect.** Brown, Purcell, and Palinscar show that the instructional methods often used with poor readers may actually widen the gap between successful and unsuccessful students. They also report new participatory teaching techniques that may be able to reverse this trend.

V. **The effects of prejudice and stress.** Reginald Gougis points out that emotional stress always has negative effects on learning. He argues that Black students are subject to unique and persistent stressed because they are so often the targets of racial prejudice.

VI. **Effects of Headstart programs.** Richard Darlington presents the findings of The Consortium of Longitudinal Studies on the effectiveness of pre-school programs. The data shows that, contrary to what has been supposed, such programs have had substantial positive effects on subsequent school performance.

VII. **Cultural deprivation.** Herbert Ginsburg, who attacked the deficiency theories ten years ago in a book called, The Myth of the Deprived Child, reviews recent cross-cultural and subcultural research. The results of that research invalidates the myth still further: The basic abilities required for mathematics and other school subjects are equally present in every cultural group.

VIII. Neisser points out that the fact that there are several cultural hypotheses does not mean that only one of them is right. It is likely that they are **all** right. Many factors contribute to the difficult situation in which minority children find themselves. Moreover, all of these factors are usually superimposed on the direct effect of poverty. Most minority children come from poor families; poor people experience a great many stresses from which the wealthier classes are sheltered, and poor people have fewer resources to spare for academic matters when something goes wrong.

The arguments presented here focus on the actual school performance of minority children (most often, Black children), i.e., on achievement test scores, mastery of academic material, promotion, and high school graduation. Most of the contributors are more interested in school performance than in test intelligence, even though the latter has attracted just as much public attention. The educational disadvantages of minority children would persist even if every standardized test were abolished tomorrow.

In his essay, "The ideology of Intelligence and IQ. Magic in Education." Dr. Hilliard makes the following statement:

"The standardized IQ tests which are in use in the schools are scientifically and pedagogically without merit. The (concept of) "intelligence" is a hypothetical notion whose valid expression is yet to be born. IQ tests and the concept of intelligence can be discarded at present, and teaching strategies would be unaffected. To successful teachers, the tests are at best a pure nuisance, and at worst a reactive influence on teaching and learning. The tests are not simply culturally biased. That bias is only a symptom of the problem, which is their scientific inadequacy. To say that "they are the best we have" is not to

say that they contribute anything useful at all to instruction. The concept of intelligence is embryonic and has only assumed value for research. Its utility for instruction remains to be demonstrated. School teachers and students should be relieved of the burden of this bad science and psychological ideology. Test-makers should come again when this product can help make education better." (Hilliard, 1991, p.145).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Because the focus of this study was the situation in Asheville, North Carolina, the recommendations contained in this section concern themselves with the Asheville City School System and, more specifically, Isaac Dickson School.

As pointed out by Dr. Charles E. Lawrence, specialist in educational management, success in any major endeavor requires a sound organizational structure, with clearly defined methodologies and precise assessment tools to measure quality and success on an ongoing basis. In the instant situation, we must therefore spend less effort debating the subject matter to be covered, and more effort constructing methods to evaluate success. In other words, we need to clearly understand the concept of "Outcome based Education".

In order to raise academic achievement of all students, there are several organizational tasks that must be accomplished. Programs will either succeed or fail depending on the existence of systems adequate for assessing achievement. As an example, every child must be prepared to meet the minimum requirements outlined and mandated by the State of North Carolina. If we are not able to establish this, we are in violation of state regulations. In reviewing the data, it became apparent that we were focusing on the completion of the tasks outlined in the state requirement, with no method for assessing whether students had mastered the material intended by the requirements.

Such an assessment will be in place for grades one and two in the Asheville City Schools in Communication and Math Skills for the 1992/93 school year. The purposed of this assessment are:

- To gather information about individual students in order to plan future lessons.
- To document each student's progress toward specified goals during the year.

- To evaluate each student's achievement of appropriate goals in communication and math skills.

These efforts will begin the process of monitoring academic achievement for all students. It will also provide a valuable resource for teachers, parents, and students to achieve consistent success. The effort also proves valuable in designing individualized instruction when students are assessed before and after instruction, so that concepts can be re - taught where necessary to assure mastery. The assessment is designed to prepare students for the North Carolina End-of Grade Testing Program (formerly the California Achievement Test), which preparation will prove more valuable if done at all grade levels.

The Communication skills component includes reading skills since reading is one form of communication. It must be recognized, however, that reading is more than just another communication skill. It is, in fact, the very core of communication, and must be given specific and intense emphasis.

The specific goals of the Communication Skills component are clearly outline in the "NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice", which is quoted below:

NAEYC POSITION STATEMENT ON
DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE
(Excerpt)

Component
Integrated Curriculum
APPROPRIATE Practice

The goals of the language and literacy program are for children to expand their ability to communicate orally and through reading and writing, and to enjoy these activities. Technical skills or sub skills are taught as needed to accomplish the larger goals, not as the goal itself. Teachers, provide generous amounts of time and a variety of interesting activities for children to develop language, writing, spelling, and reading ability, such as: looking through, reading, or being read high quality children's literature and nonfiction for pleasure and information; drawing, dictating, and writing about their activities or fantasies; planning and implementing projects that involve research at suitable levels of difficulty;

creating teacher-made or child-written lists of steps to follow to accomplish a weekly class newspaper; interviewing various people to obtain information or projects; making books of various kinds (riddle books, *what if* books, books about pets); listening to recordings or viewing high quality films of children's books; being read at least one high quality book or part of a book each day by adults or older children; using the school library and the library area of the classroom regularly. Some children read aloud daily to the teacher, another child, or a small group of children, while other do so weekly. **Sub skills such as learning letters, phonics, and word recognition are taught as needed to individual children and small groups through enjoyable games and activities. Teachers use the teacher's edition of the basal reader series as a guide to plan project and hands-on activities relevant to what is read and to structure learning situations.** Teachers accept children's invented spelling with minimal reliance on teacher prescribed spelling lists.**Teachers also teach literacy as the need arises when working on science, social studies, and other content areas.**

INAPPROPRIATE Practice

The goal of the reading program is for each child to pass the standardized tests given throughout the year at or near grade level. **Reading is taught as the acquisition of skills and sub skills. Teachers teach reading only as a discrete subject. When teaching other subjects, they do not feel they are teaching reading.** A sign of excellent teaching is considered to be silence in the classroom and so conversation is allowed infrequently during select times. Language, writing, and spelling instruction are focused on workbooks. Writing is taught as grammar and penmanship. The focus of the reading program is the basal reader, used only in reading groups, and accompanying workbooks and worksheets. The teacher's role is to prepare and implement the reading lesson in the teacher's guidebook for each group each day and to see that other children have enough seat work to keep them busy throughout the reading group time. Phonics instruction stresses learning rules rather than developing understand of systematic relationships between letters and sounds. Children are required to complete worksheets or to complete the basal reader although they are capable of reading at a higher level. Everyone knows which childen are in the slowest reading group. Children's writing efforts are rejected if correct spelling and standard English are not used.

Evaluation

No letter or numerical grades are given during the primary years. Grades are considered inadequate reflections of children's ongoing learning.

Each child's progress is assessed primarily through observation and recording at regular intervals. Results are used to improve and individualize instruction. No letter or number grades are given. Children are helped to understand and correct their errors.

Children's progress is reported to parents in the form of narrative comments following an outline of topics. A child's progress is reported in comparison to his or her own previous performance and parents are given general information about how the child compares to standardized national averages.

Grades are seen as important in motivating children to do their work.

Children are tested regularly on each subject. Graded tests are sent home or are filed after children see their grades. To ease children's stress caused by the emphasis placed on test scores, teachers "teach to the test."

Children's progress is reported to parents in letter or numerical grades. Emphasis is on how well the child compares to others in the same grade and to standardized national averages.

The basic message seems clear: We can no longer afford to make educated guesses about where we are in education. (The term "educated guesses", in fact, contradicts itself.) Using assessment information plays a critical part in raising academic achievement. We must use every opportunity to acquire knowledge about our students, the school's philosophy, the school environment, the classroom environment, the community environment, and the home environment. Before we can truthfully say that we can remedy the situation, we must know what the situation is or is not. We will not know the situation until we have assessed it.

A more in-depth look at the following areas will give us a constant update of the situation:

- 1. Types of classroom environments.
- 2. Formal and informal assessments.

- 3. Assessments for instructional planning.
- 4. Assessment during instruction.
- 5. Paper & pencil test questions.
- 6. Performance assessment.
- 7. Grading pupil performance.
- 8. Standardized achievement tests.

• In her book, Reading & Diagnosis, Lois A. Bader states that a more in-depth study needs to be made on reading diagnosis and remediation in the classroom. From that statement, we can conclude that, if every teacher possessed the skills to do diagnosis and remediation, we could triple the use of programs such as Chapter I.

The terms used to define reading have caused such a controversy that they must now be looked at along with the current situation in view: not only what we want it to be, but where we are, and what is needed to make every teacher and parent an effective teacher or reading. We must study various reading models, and then adopt one that can be used along with the *Basic Education Plan.* **All teachers must become effective diagnostic remedial reading teachers.**

The implementation of these recommendations requires teacher training as outlines by author Mark Wolery in his book, Principles and Procedures of Effective Teaching. Wolery states:

"What does it mean to say that a student has learned something? In one respect, this is a simple question with a simple answer. Learning has occurred when a student can do something that he or she previously could not do. At another level, however, learning is an extraordinarily complex process. The actual mechanism of learning and the internal processes it requires are unobservable events. Scientists, philosophers, and educators, all have speculated about the nature of those events and how they occur. Since the facilitation of learning is the teacher's most fundamental task, an understanding of the learning process and the ability to use effective techniques to enhance it are essential."

Of the topics listed Wolery as most essential, we have excerpted the following as most applicable to our situation:

1. Learning and learning theory.
2. Effective teaching: what it is and jsn't.
3. Structuring the environment for effective teaching.
4. Writing behavioral objectives.
5. Insuring high-quality objectives.

6. Defining and measuring behaviors.
7. Using data to make instructional decisions.
8. Using reinforcers to facilitate skill acquisition and fluency.
9. Decision Model for reducing the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors.
10. Aversive techniques to reduce inappropriate behavior.
11. Using behavior management systems and peers.

In their book, Leadership Guide for Elementary School Improvement, Glickman and Esposito state:

"Synergistic theory is based upon the assumption that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As one aspect of a particular system is altered, there must be a concurrent alteration in other parts of that system if it is to function effectively. We believe that change efforts in many public schools have attempted to make these system aspects change without consideration of other schooling dimensions. The administrator concerned with institutionalizing meaningful, effective, and lasting change cannot view any one aspect of schooling in isolation from others."

In looking at diversity issues, we must begin to see the correlation between modality strengths and achievement. In the book, Teaching Through Modality Strengths, authors Barbe and Swassing point out the need for emphasis to be place on:

- The concept of modality.
- Identifying modality strengths.
- The practice of modality-based instruction.
- The relationship between modality strengths and sex, handedness, and grade.

When we begin to know all we can about our students and how they function, we can then begin to speak their language. Teaching to various modalities is that language.

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Appendix: List of Speakers at the 1982 Cornell Conference

- **A. Wade Boykin,** Professor of Psychology at Howard University; editor of Research Directions of Black Psychologists; (Russell Sage, 1979.)

- **Ann L. Brown,** Professor of Phschology and Educational Psychology; and Research Professor at the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois (Champaign); editor of Advances in Developmental Psychology. (Erbium, 1981, 1982, 1984.)

- **Richard B. Darlington,** Professor of Psychology at Cornell University; author of Lasting Effects of Early Education. (Society for Research in Child Development, 1982, 47, Nos. 2-3.)

- **Ronald R. Edmonds.** Died July 15, 1983. At the time of his death, he was Professor in three departments at Michigan State University: Teacher Education, Administration & Curriculum, and Urban Affairs Programs. 1978 - 1981, he was Principal Instructional Officer & Senior Assistant to the Chancellor for Instruction in the New York City School System.

- **Herbert P. Ginsburg.** Professor of Psychology & Education and Chair of the Department of Human Development, Cognition, & Learning at Teachers College of Columbia University; author of The Myth of the Deprived Child: Poor Children's Intellect and Education (Prentice Hall, 1972); editor of The Development of Mathematical Thinking. (Academic Press, 1983.)

- **Reginald A. Gougis.** Assistant Professor of Psychology, Hampton University.

- **Ulric Neisser,** Robert Woodruff Professor of Psychology, Emory University, and Director of the Emory Cognition Project; author of Cognition & Reality (Freeman, 1976); 1 editor of Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts (Freeman, 1982.)

- **John U. Ogbu.** native of Nigeria, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley; author of Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Academic Press, 1978.)

- **Annemaire S. Palinscar.** Assistant Professor, Special Education, Michigan State University; from 1981-1983. She was affiliated with the Center for the Study of Reading in Champaign, Illinois; she has also been a public school teacher and program supervisor.

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